

Criteria to Evaluate the Proposed Changes to the Medicare Benefit Package

ISSUE: What criteria should policymakers use to assess policy options for changing the Medicare benefit package? Furthermore, how are the criteria related to one another and what tradeoffs might they entail?

The way in which the benefit package reforms are designed could have a significant impact on Medicare beneficiaries as well as the costs and sustainability of the program. Furthermore, all policy options for changing Medicare's benefit package will affect one or more outcomes that are important to various program stakeholders. Devising a systematic approach to evaluating proposed changes to the benefit package is important so that the values that are being considered can be more easily identified and the tradeoffs inherent in different policy options may be more clearly understood.

KEY POINTS: A set of six criteria are proposed to evaluate the existing Medicare benefit package and any proposed changes to the benefit package. These criteria are as follows:

1. financial protection,
2. access to care,
3. efficiency,
4. financial sustainability over time,
5. operational feasibility, and
6. freedom of choice.

ACTION: We would like the Commission to provide guidance on the six selected criteria, their definitions and interpretations as presented in the attached document.

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